



Programming to Address Violence

August 10, 2021

Agenda

- Background
- Trends in Violent Crime
- The Public Health Approach
- Office of Public Health
- Community Violence Interruption Programs
- Hospital-Based Violence Interruption Programs
- Best Practices
- Conclusion



Background

- **Court motion:**

I move to approve the Justice Administration Department, Commissioners Court Analyst's Office, and Public Health analyze the feasibility and cost of creating a new county level agency or program to administer violence interruption programs based on proven public health techniques to end cycles of violence in the community. The study should contemplate that this agency or program would operate independent of law enforcement. The initial report on the findings of the study should be provided within 30 days. Once the report is complete, there will be a public hearing.

- Report by Commissioners Court Analyst's Office delivered on July 9.
- Collaboration between JAD, Precinct 1, and consultants since delivery.



Trends in Violent Crime

- Increases in violent crime (especially murders and aggravated assaults) across the country and in Harris County.
- Across US and in Harris County increases are most notable in most disadvantaged communities.
- This points to the need for an approach that addresses the *root causes of violence*.



The Public Health Approach

- Jurisdictions across the country are adopting the public health approach to identify and address the root causes of violence.
- Steps to the public health approach:
 - Define the problem
 - Identify risk and protective factors
 - Develop and test prevention strategies
 - Assure widespread adoption



Offices of Public Health

- Cities across the country have created non-law enforcement offices to diagnose and “treat” violence like the public health crisis it is.
- Those departments address violence through targeted interventions.
- This approach has durably reduced violence in jurisdictions like Richmond, CA, where homicides were reduced by 40%.
- The reports this transmittal accompanies examine two programs that would be implemented under the Division of Community Health and Prevention Services
 - Community-Based Violence Interruption Program (Street Outreach)
 - Hospital-Based Violence Interruption Program



Street Outreach Programs

- Such programs are often derived from CureViolence in Chicago, which reduced violence in disadvantaged neighborhoods on the South and West sides.
 - Effectively adapted in Brooklyn, Baltimore, Phoenix, and elsewhere.
- **Violence Interrupters** with credible lived experience canvass communities and stop violence before it starts.
- **Outreach Workers** connect individuals at greatest risk of perpetrating and experiencing violence with community resources to help them desist.
- Program structure, opportunities for implementation, best practices, implementation areas, and review of related programs described in report submitted by Tillmon Consulting and Training to today's court.



Hospital-Based Violence Interruption Programs

- These programs have been implemented in many emergency departments across the country.
- Individuals hospitalized after violent injury/assault that are at risk of retaliating or being injured again are counselled, connected to community resources, and offered case management.
- Such programs drastically reduced reinjury rates in San Francisco, Oakland, Chicago, Maryland, and other cities.
- A report on implementation elsewhere, a background on best practices, and an overview of implementation opportunities in Harris County Trauma Centers, was compiled by the Hospital Alliance for Violence Intervention, and is attached.



Best Practices

- Insure programs are implemented in areas that have both high need and a high ability to staff and implement a program.
 - Accomplished through asset mapping produced by consultants.
- Produce a sophisticated and compelling evaluation of the program to ensure that progress is measured and reported to community members.
 - Harris County Public Health is continuing to collaborate with consultants to facilitate rigorous evaluation.



Conclusions

- These programs will not completely eliminate violence in Harris County. But they will ease the root causes which drive violence, and enable law enforcement to more effectively protect our neighbors.
- Harris County Public Health will continue to collaborate with consultants identified here, policy analysts from the Commissioners Precincts, the Justice Administration Department, and HCSO to identify and implement pioneering policies that reduce violence with a public health approach.

